

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 217677 POSS DUPE
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 IO-13 SSO-00 ISO-00 /039 R

DRAFTED BY D:DABRIZILL:MFW
APPROVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY
ARA:VPVAKY
ARA:RKFOX
IO:CWMAYNES
S/S:JPERRY
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 217677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, NS

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24

REFS: PORT OF SPAIN 2239 AND 2426

1. PLEASE DELIVER FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING
SECRETARY TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JOHN S. DONALDSON
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. MINISTER:

OUR CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN PORT OF SPAIN HAS INFORMED ME OF
HIS RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTRY OFFICIALS REGARDING
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THE UN COMMITTEE OF 24'S FORTHCOMING MEETING TO REVIEW THE
STATUS OF PUERTO RICO. I WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT OUR
TWO GOVERNMENTS AGREE THAT THE ISSUE OF PUERTO RICO'S
RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE DETERMINED BY
THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO THEMSELVES. AS YOU MAY KNOW,
THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO HAS SUGGESTED THAT A STATUS
REFERENDUM BE HELD IN PUERTO RICO FOLLOWING THE 1980

ELECTION, AND PRESIDENT CARTER, IN HIS JULY 25 PROCLAMATION,

HAS PLEDGED THAT THE U.S. WOULD FULLY SUPPORT THE DECISION OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE, EVEN IF THAT DECISION RESULTED IN A MODIFICATION OF PUERTO RICO'S PRESENT COMMONWEALTH STATUS (E.G., STATEHOOD OR INDEPENDENCE).

THE COMMITTEE OF 24 IS SCHEDULED TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO ON AUGUST 28 AND, AS AT PAST SESSIONS, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO SECURE APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING PUERTO RICO A COLONY OF THE UNITED STATES. SUCH A RESOLUTION, IF APPROVED, WOULD FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO IN 1952 WHEN, IN A FREE AND OPEN REFERENDUM, THEY ADOPTED COMMONWEALTH STATUS. THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO SUBSEQUENTLY REAFFIRMED THAT DECISION IN 1967, AND THE UNGA, IN A 1953 RESOLUTION, FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO HAD EXERCISED THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION BY THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF COMMONWEALTH STATUS. THUS, TODAY, THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO ENJOY A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM AND A POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. AND, AS PRESIDENT CARTER'S EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY PROCLAMATION INDICATED, THE U.S. FULLY RESPECTS THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE

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OF PUERTO RICO.

IN THE PAST, YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN A NEUTRAL POSITION IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 AND ABSTAINED ON PROCEDURAL RESOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE DEFERRED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE. THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, OUR REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE VOTE IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WILL BE EXTREMELY CLOSE AND THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT'S VOTE COULD, AS A RESULT, BE DECISIVE. I, THEREFORE, HOPE THAT, IN VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WILL SUPPORT A MOTION TO DEFER ACTION ON PUERTO RICO WHEN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TAKES UP THE ISSUE ON AUGUST 28.

SINCERELY,

WARREN CHRISTOPHER
ACTING SECRETARY

END TEXT.

3. PLEASE CONFIRM DELIVERY. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, COMMITTEES, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE217677
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DABRIZILL:MFW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780349-0608
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780819/aaaaapyo.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1d2af25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 PORT OF SPAIN 2239
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1607859
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24
TAGS: PORG, PDEV, RQ, NS, UNGA, COMMITTEE OF 24, (DONALDSON, JOHN S)
To: PORT OF SPAIN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1d2af25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014